

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8185
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DACCA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY
CINCPAC PRIORITY

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y ADD EO, TAGS, SUBJ

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

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TAGS: PFOR, IN , BG
SUBJECT: ZIA VISIT APPARENT SUCCESS

SUMMARY. IF PUBLIC RHETORIC AND INITIAL PRESS REACTION ARE
VALID INDICATORS, BANGLADESHI PRESIDENT ZIAUR RAHMAN'S BRIEF
VISIT TO INDIA DECEMBER 19 AND 20 WAS SUCCESSFUL IN ITS
STATED PURPOSE OF CONTRIBUTING TO THE FURTHER RESTORATION OF
TRUST AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. ON THE
SUBSTANTIVE SIDE, THE TWO SIDES ELEVATED THE JOINT RIVERS
COMMISSION TO THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL AND REPORTEDLY AGREED
THAT IT BEGIN ITS WORK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE ON THE LONG-TERM
SOLUTION TO AUGMENTING THE GANGA WATERS. THEY ARE ALSO
SAID TO HAVE AGREED "IN PRINCIPLE" ON RESPECTIVE
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TRANSIT RIGHTS, FOR BANGLADESH THROUGH INDIA TO NEPAL
AND FOR INDIA THROUGH BANGLADESH TO ITS EASTERN STATES.
ZIA APPEARS TO HAVE REASSURED THE INDIANS THAT THE
HINDU MINORITY OF BANGLADESH WILL CONTINUE TO BE
PROTECTED BY HIS GOVERNMENT. IN TURN, THE INDIANS
SEEM TO HAVE GONE OUT OF THEIR WAY TO ENHANCE ZIA'S
PERSONAL STATURE. OFFICIAL INDIAN SOURCES REPORTEDLY

DESCRIBED THE TALKS AS "HIGHLY SATISFACTORY", AND ZIA TOLD THE PRESS THAT THE PROSPECTS FOR RELATIONS IN THE FUTURE WERE "VERY, VERY GOOD." END SUMMARY.

1. IF PUBLIC RHETORIC AND INITIAL PRESS REACTION ARE VALID INDICATORS, BANGLADESH PRESIDENT ZIAUR RAHMAN'S BRIEF VISIT TO INDIA WAS SUCCESSFUL IN ITS STATED PURPOSE OF CONTRIBUTING TO THE FURTHER RESTORATION OF TRUST AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. ZIA WAS GIVEN A WARM WELCOME AT PALAM AIRPORT THE AFTERNOON OF DECEMBER 19. IN HIS REMARKS, PRESIDENT REDDY TOLD ZIA THAT HIS POSITION IN BANGLADESH HISTORY WAS ALREADY ASSURED AS A "BRAVE FREEDOM FIGHTER WHO WAS FIRST TO DECLARE THE INDEPENDENCE OF BANGLADESH" AND WHO HAS SINCE EARNED "WIDE RESPECT" AT HOME AND ABROAD AS A LEADER TRULY DEDICATED TO THE PROGRESS OF HIS COUNTRY. REDDY ALSO SOUNDED THE INDIAN THEME OF THE VISIT: BECAUSE OF THEIR UNIQUE COMMON HERITAGE AND GEOGRAPHICAL PROXIMITY, THE TWO COUNTRIES ARE INTERDEPENDENT AND FACE SIMILAR PROBLEMS IN BRINGING THE BENEFITS OF MODERNIZATION TO THEIR PEOPLES. ZIA IN RESPONSE SAID THAT HE ATTACHED GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF "MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL COOPERATION" AND HOPE THAT HIS VISIT WOULD RESULT IN THE "FURTHER RESTORATION OF TRUST" BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

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2. ZIA MET ALONE WITH MORARJI DESAI, A SESSION WHICH REPORTEDLY WAS SCHEDULED FOR 45 MINUTES BUT CONTINUED FOR AN HOUR AND A HALF. AFTER THE MEETING, ZIA TOLD NEWSMEN THAT HE AND THE PM HAD "VERY FRUITFUL" DISCUSSIONS DURING WHICH VIRTUALLY ALL BILATERAL MATTERS WERE TOUCHED UPON. HE SAID THAT THE FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR INDO-BANGLADESHI RELATIONS WERE "VERY, VERY GOOD". AT A LATER SESSION, ZIA AND DESAI WERE JOINED BY BANGLADESHI ADVISORS SHAMSUL HAQUE AND B.M. ABBAS AND FOREIGN SECRETARY TABARAK HOSSAIN. ON THE INDIAN SIDE, FOREIGN MINISTER VAJPAYEE, STATE MINISTER KUNDU, DEFENSE MINISTER JAGJIVAN RAM AND FOREIGN SECRETARY JAGAT MEHTA PARTICIPATED. OFFICIAL INDIAN SOURCES TOLD THE PRESS THAT THE TALKS WERE HIGHLY SATISFACTORY.

3. AT A BANQUET IN THE EVENING, PRESIDENT REDDY SAID THAT THE "MOST NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENT" OF THE FARAKKA AGREEMENT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE "BREADTH OF OUTLOOK AND STATESMANSHIP" OF PRESIDENT ZIA. REDDY ALSO CALLED FOR JOINT EFFORTS TO HARNESS THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE AREA WHICH WILL OTHERWISE GO LARGELY UNUTILIZED. WHILE INDIA RECOGNIZED THAT EACH

COUNTRY SHOULD DEVELOP ITS OWN POLICIES, COOPERATION WAS IMPORTANT, ESPECIALLY ON SUCH ISSUES AS FLOOD CONTROL, AND THEREFORE INDIA AND BANGLADESH SHOULD NOT FOLLOW "EXCLUSIVE OR ISOLATED" POLICIES. FEW COUNTRIES CAN COMBINE BETTER THAN INDIA AND BANGLADESH, HE SAID, TO DEVELOP AND ADOPT TECHNOLOGIES AND METHODS FOR DEVELOPMENT. TOUCHING ON THE COMMUNAL ISSUE, REDDY REMARKED THAT DEMOCRATIC INDIA WAS DETERMINED TO PROVIDE FULL PROTECTION AND ENHANCED OPPORTUNITIES FOR ITS LINGUISTIC AND RELIGIOUS MINORITIES. IN HIS REMARKS, ZIA SPOKE OF THE VERY SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN RELATIONS SINCE APRIL AND ATTRIBUTED SUCH PROGRESS TO THE ADHERENCE OF BOTH SIDES TO THE PRINCIPLES OF MUTUAL RESPECT FOR SOVEREIGN EQUALITY, NONINTERFERENCE IN EACH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OTHER'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS, AND RECOGNITION OF THE NEED FOR MUTUAL COOPERATION. ZIA ENDORSED THE IOZP IN STANDARD FASHION AND SAID THAT HE WELCOMED THE EXTENSION OF A ZONE OF PEACE TO THE ENTIRE REION. BUT HE ALSO ADDED THAT A SIGNIFICANT STEP WOULD BE THE "PROGRESSIVE REDUCTION IN ARMS IN THE REGION" ALONG WITH EFFORTS TOWARD WORLD DISARMAMENT.

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8186
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA PRIORITY
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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

4. FOLLOWING A MORNING TRIP TO A MUSLIM SHRINE IN AJMER, ACCOMPANIED BY VAJPAYEE, PRESIDENT ZIA DEPARTED DELHI THE AFTERNOON OF DECEMBER 20. AT THE AIRPORT HE SAID THAT THE TALKS HAD BEEN EXTREMELY USEFUL, BUT WHAT WAS "MORE IMPORTANT WAS THE SPIRIT OF UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION WHICH MAKRED THE TALKS." ACCORDING TO "THE PATRIOT", WHEN ZIA WAS ASKED HOW CLOSE RELATIONS NOW WERE, PM DESAI INTERJECTED "AS CLOSE AS THEY CAN BE", TO WHICH REMARK ZIA NODDED IN AGREEMENT. IN A JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE TRIP, THE TWO SIDES CONFIRMED THEIR DESIRE TO "CONSOLIDATE AND DEVELOP FURTHER THE IMPROVED CLIMATE OF RELATIONS", DECLARED THE FARAKKA AGREEMENT OF "HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE," AND CALLED FOR A "SPEEDY SOLUTION" TO THE LONG-TERM PROBLEM OF AUGMENTING THE GANGA FLOW. THE TWO SIDES RECOGNIZED THAT THE AGREEMENT HAD PAVED THE WAY FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WIDER COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, "PARTICULARLY FOR THE OPTIMUM UTILIZATION OF THE WATER RESOURCES OF THE REGION AS A WHOLE." IN AN OBLIQUE REFERENCE TO THE MINORITIES ISSUE, THE COMMUNIQUE AFFIRMED THE "HERITAGE OF HUMAN VALUES, OF UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD, TOLERANCE AND COMPASSION WHICH THEIR COUNTRIES SHARE AND WHICH INSPIRE AND GUIDE THEM IN THEIR POLICIES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HARMONY FOR THEIR RESPECTIVE PEOPLES." THE REST OF THE COMMUNIQUE REPORTEDLY IS A STATEMENT OF STANDARD, SHARED POSITIONS ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, INCLUDING THE IOZP (BUT NOT ZIA'S CALL FOR REGIONAL ARMS REDUCTION).

COMMENT: TODAY IS AN INDIAN MUSLIM HOLIDAY AND BOTH MEA AND THE BANGLADESH HIGH COMMISSION ARE CLOSED, BUTN WE ANTICIPATE OBTAINING THEIR VIEWS OF VISIT LATER IN THE WEEK AND WILL COMMENT FURTHER. ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN NO EDITORIAL COMMENT YET, THE INDIAN PRESS HAS BEEN POSITIVE IN REPORTING THE VISIT, DESCRIBING OFFICIAL SOURCES AS "ELATED" BY ZIA'S COMMENTS ON THE MINORITIES AND HIGHLY GRATIFIED BY THE OUTCOME OF THE VISIT. AS TO BE EXPECTED, THE UPGRADING OF THE JOINT RIVERS COMMISSION AND THE CALL FOR SPEEDY RESOLUTION OF THE GANGA PROBLEM WERE HIGHLIGHTED BY INDIAN NEWSPAPERS. THE PRESS ALSO REPORTED THAT AGREEMENT "IN PRINCIPLE" HAD BEEN REACHED ON THE NEED FOR TRANSIT

RIGHTS FOR BANGLADESH THROUGH INDIA TO NEPAL AND FOR
INDIA THROUGH BANGLADESH TO ITS EASTERN STATES. THE
USUALLY JADED DELHI NEWSMEN, MOREOVER, SEEMED QUITE
TAKEN WITH ZIA AS A PERSON. THE "INDIAN EXPRESS"
SAID HE CUT "AN IMPRESSIVE FIGURE", LOOKED "AS SMART
AS THE GUARD COMMANDER" IN REVIEWING THE HONOR GUARD,
AND WAS "EQUALLY IMPRESSIVE" IN HIS MEETING WITH
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JOURNALISTS. "THE HINDUSTAN TIMES" CALLED ZIA
A "SOLDIER-STATESMAN" WHO SPOKE IN A "CLEAR, SHARP
AND FORCEFUL VOICE." THERE WERE NO REPORTED ANTI-ZIA
DEMONSTRATIONS IN DELHI, BUT IN CALCUTTA A CONGRESS
YOUTH-FRONT DEMONSTRATED OUTSIDE THE BANGLADESH
DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSION.
GOHEEN

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